

# POP MANIFESTO

Emerging in July 2023, Protect our Places (POP) is a coalition of nine campaigns and organisations based across London. Each of us is dedicated to preserving the vibrant essence of our beloved town centres and markets, and to protecting these diverse spaces from gentrification. London's true richness lies not in the coffers of offshore and speculative developers and investors, but in the mosaic of people, places, heritage and cultures that define us.

The markets and retail sites at the centre of our campaigns are some of our communities' important social and cultural spaces, especially for those facing ongoing and insidious marginalisation, racialisation and exclusion. They are proudly Black and racially diverse; working-class; diasporic and intergenerational. In each of these spaces, we can gather together in strength, unity and compassion.

Our work is, thus, an act of collective care and solidarity, both within our respective communities and across London. Although we face distinct challenges and contexts, we share a common goal: to develop an alternative, community-led approach to urban change in London — one which protects our town centres, markets, high streets and key community spaces from speculative development, and protects our communities from displacement, erasure and further marginalisation. Together, we strive to create a London where the voices of its communities are prioritised over those of commercial interests.



# P.O.P

# PROTECT OUR PLACES

COMING TOGETHER TO DEMAND MORE RACIALLY-JUST URBAN PLANNING IN LONDON

With funding from:



plushse16 x NOPRICE ON CULTURE

+ an emerging grassroots campaign at Tooting Market

# AGENDA

1. POP - PROTECT OUR PLACES: WHAT / WHO / WHERE / WHY
2. REPORT - COMING TOGETHER TO DEMAND MORE RACIALLY JUST URBAN PLANNING IN LONDON
3. SIX COLLECTIVE LEARNINGS
4. WHAT'S NEXT?
5. QUESTIONS / THOUGHTS

LOVE THE ELEPHANT

FIGHT  
THE  
TOWER

SAVE BRICK LANE

# 1. POP - PROTECT OUR PLACES: WHAT / WHO / WHERE / WHY





SAVE  
RIDLEY  
ROAD



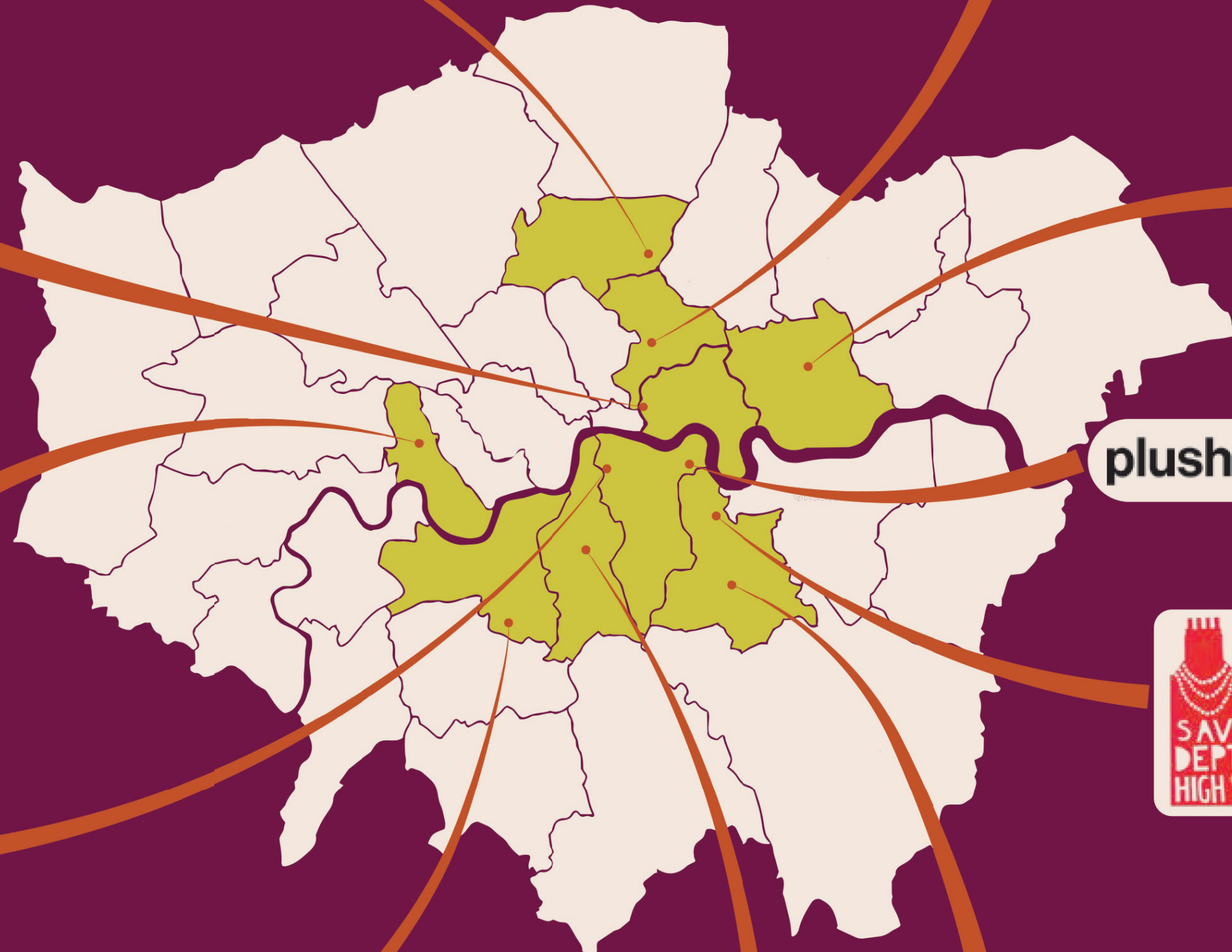
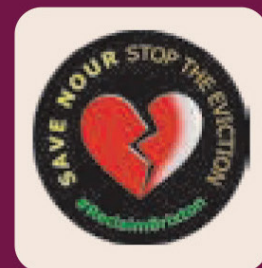
SAVE  
BRICK  
LANE!

plushse16 X NOPRICEON™  
CULTURE

FRIENDS OF  
SHEPHERD'S  
BUSH  
MARKET



EMERGING:  
TOOTING MARKET TRADERS  
AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
(joined May 2025)

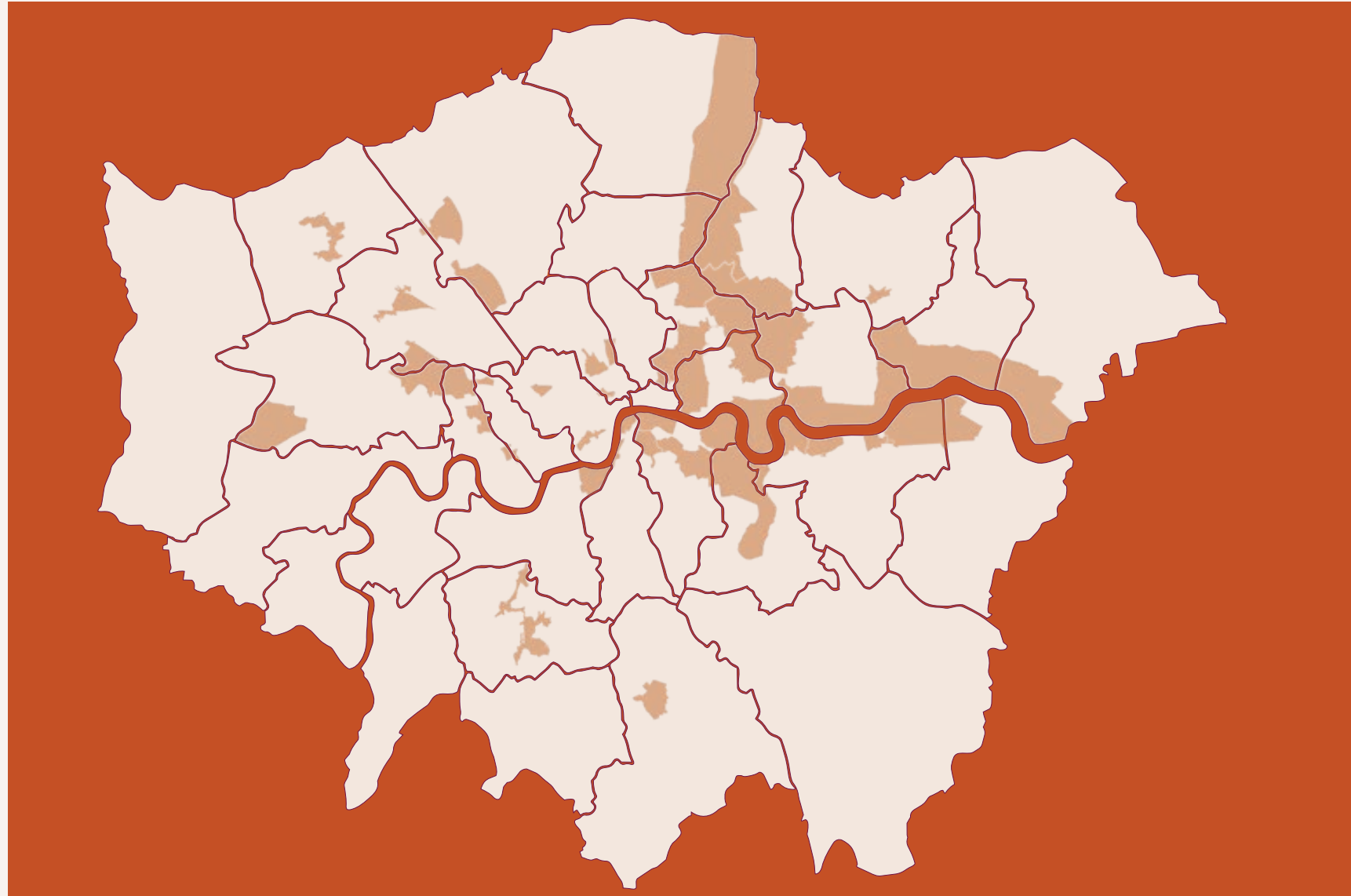


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OPPORTUNITY AREAS



AREAS FOR REGENERATION



'LONDON IS A MULTICULTURAL PLACE. CLASS AND 'RACE' ARE A HUGE FACTOR IN WHERE STREET MARKETS AND RETAIL SPACES ARE AND HOW THEY ARE USED.'

'[THEY] ARE PART AND PARCEL OF THE HERITAGE OF WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES WHO WANT TO CONTINUE EATING IN THIS WAY AND WHO HAVE THE OPTION TO DO SO.'

## 2. REPORT - COMING TOGETHER TO DEMAND MORE RACIALLY JUST URBAN PLANNING IN LONDON



## GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1.

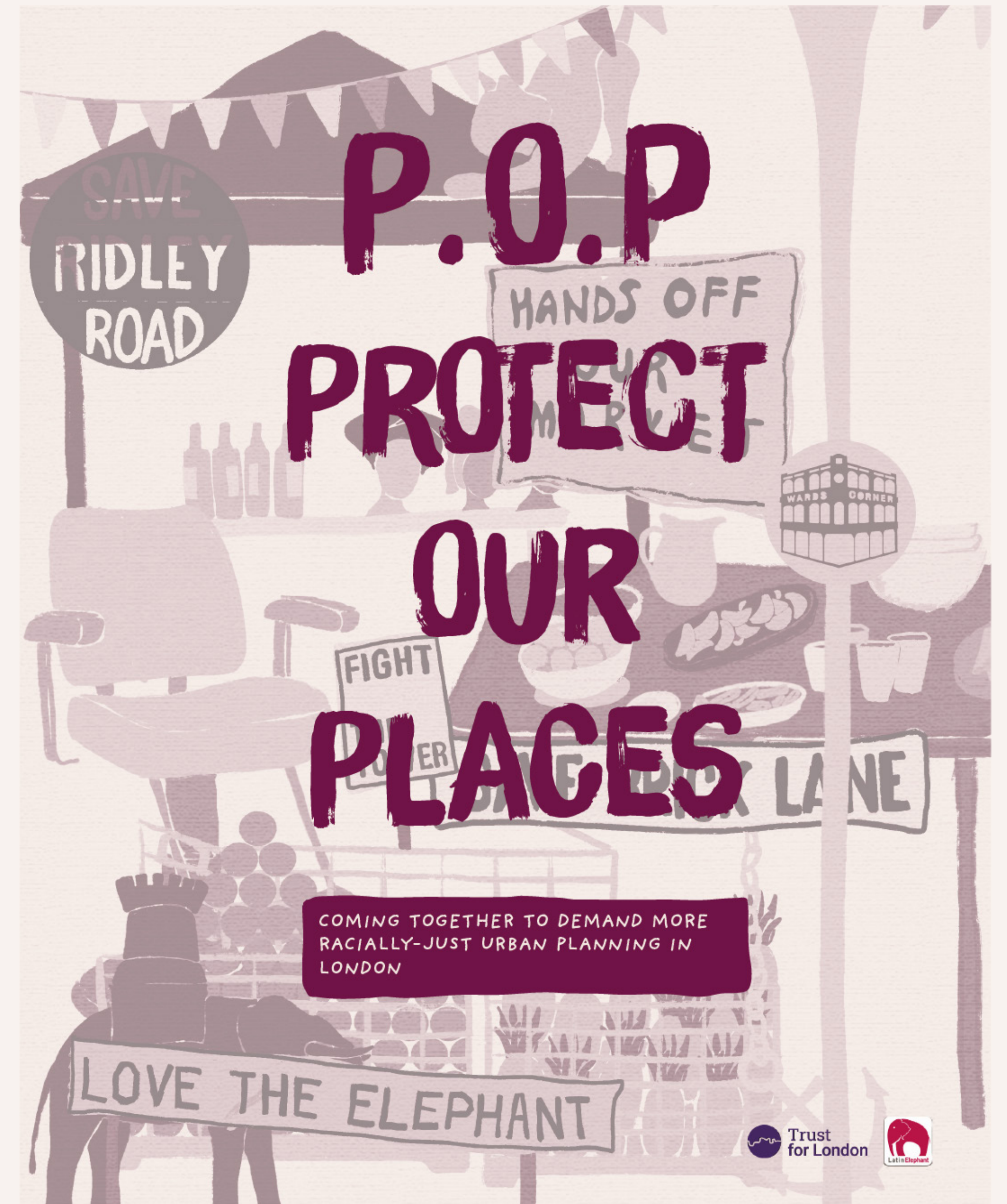
How might building solidarity between, and supporting collective action by, London's diverse working class communities facilitate more racially-just urban planning?

2.

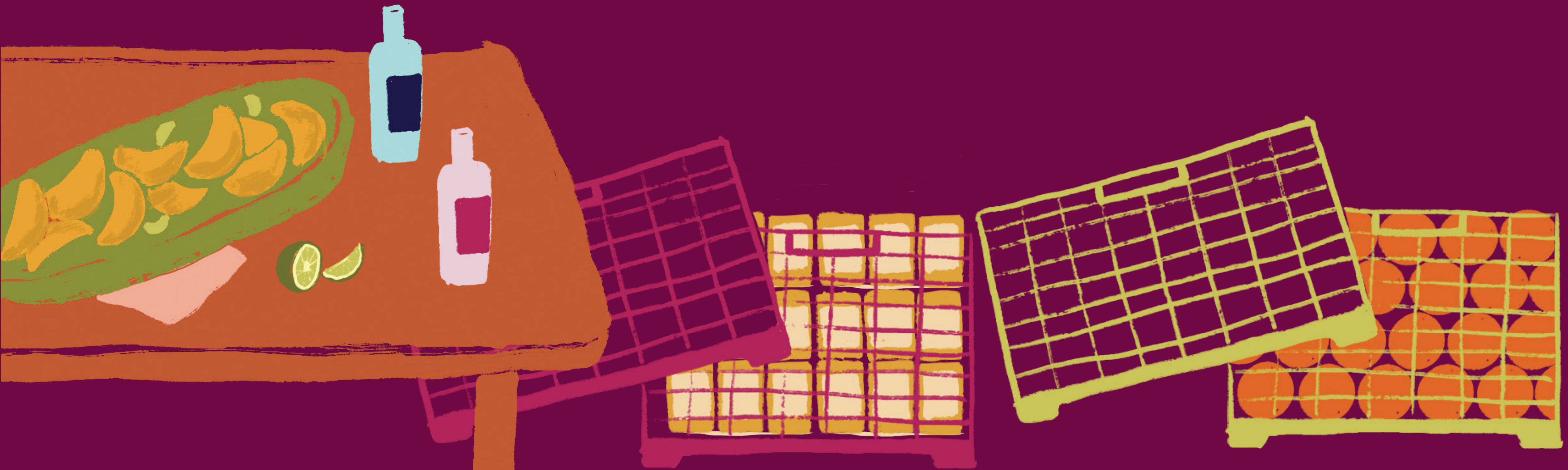
What do our collective and individual experiences reveal about the disproportionate, negative impact of planning decisions on racialised, migrant and other marginalised communities?

3.

Where and how might this inequitable, racialised impact be more critically considered within the planning process? What should the future of planning look like?



### 3. SIX COLLECTIVE LEARNINGS



# LEARNING #1: BLACK, MIGRANT AND OTHER MINORITISED AND DIVERSE WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES DISPROPORTIONATELY BEAR THE COST OF URBAN CHANGE IN LONDON.

'[PLANNING] IS, IN LONDON, A VERY RACIALISED PROCESS. BECAUSE CLASS AND RACE ARE HEAVILY INTERSECTED IN LONDON. WE CAN SEE IT VERY CLEARLY IN THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF OUR MARKETS, CAN'T WE? IT'S EVIDENT WHO THE STALL HOLDERS ARE AND WHO ARE THE PEOPLE SHOPPING IN OUR MARKETS. THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM MARGINALISED AND RACIALISED BACKGROUNDS.'

'WHAT'S HAPPENED IS THAT THE MOST VULNERABLE [TO THE CORPORATE CAPTURE OF PLANNING] ARE THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE VERY LEAST, WHICH IN OUR SOCIETY ARE THE WORKING CLASS, AND WHICH IN LONDON IS VERY RACIALISED. THE WORKING CLASS ARE THE MOST MARGINALISED VOICE IN OUR SOCIETY AND IN TERMS OF PLANNING, THEIR VOICE HAS BEEN COMPLETELY SIDELINED.'

LEARNING #2: THE PLANNING PROCESS CURRENTLY PRIORITISES PROFITS FOR DEVELOPERS OVER ENSURING OUR REVERED SHOPPING AND COMMUNITY SPACES HAVE LONGEVITY, MEET OUR NEEDS, AND ARE WELL-MAINTAINED.

'I DON'T THINK THAT PEOPLE HAVE REALLY UNDERSTOOD THE NEEDS OF MINORITISED LONDONERS FULLY. LONDON IS POORER FOR NOT UNDERSTANDING THEM BECAUSE OUR SPACES BRING IN SO MUCH MONEY FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. BUT FOR JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE, YOU ARE DESTROYING IT AND TURNING IT INTO A PLACE FULL OF OFFICES. YOU ARE LOSING OUT A LOT MORE ON THE CULTURAL ASPECT OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD THAN YOU CAN EVER GAIN THROUGH THE EXCLUSIONARY DEVELOPMENT OF AN AREA.'



LEARNING #3: CLAIMS THAT THE PLANNING PROCESS IS 'DEMOCRATIC' OR 'REPRESENTATIVE' DO NOT REFLECT THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF MOST IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND CITY.

'THERE IS A RIDICULOUS PANTOMIME PERFORMANCE, WHICH TICKS THE BOXES OF WHAT A CONSULTATION IS. IT IS NOT MEANINGFUL IN ANY WAY, SHAPE OR FORM. AND IT DOESN'T ACTUALLY GIVE ANY VOICE TO PEOPLE. IT GIVES THE APPEARANCE OF BEING DEMOCRATIC WHEN I WOULD SAY IT NO LONGER IS SO.'

'EVEN IF COMMUNITIES ARE INCLUDED IN CONSULTATIONS, HOW THEY ACTUALLY FEEL ABOUT THINGS IS NOT BEING TRANSLATED INTO POLICY NOR IS IT EVEN THE DESIRED IMPACT OF THE PLANNING PROCESS.'

# LEARNING #4: THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES AND RESOURCE LIMITATIONS THAT IMPACT THE SUCCESS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND CAMPAIGNS.



'WE'RE UP AGAINST HUGE, POWERFUL FORCES. MOST DEVELOPMENT IS BEING BROUGHT BY PEOPLE WITH COMPLETELY DIFFERENT INTERESTS TO THOSE OF OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES. IT'S ALMOST STRUCTURALLY BUILT IN – THE DISADVANTAGE, THAT WE WILL LOSE. AND THERE IS NO FUNDING IN THIS COUNTRY TO BALANCE IT OUT.'

LEARNING #5: THE COALITION HAS BEEN ONE HELPFUL AVENUE FOR OVERCOMING RESOURCE AND KNOWLEDGE DISPARITIES, AND IT HAS BEEN A KEY SITE OF COLLECTIVE RESISTANCE OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS. IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO SUPPORT MORE RACIALLY-JUST URBAN PLANNING.

'BY COMING TOGETHER, WE CONSOLIDATE OUR POWER. COMMUNITY POWER IS VERY ATOMISED AND IT'S MASSIVE, REALLY. IF YOU DID THE SUMS, THERE'S A LOT MORE OF US. AND IF WE CAN GET FURTHER IN TERMS OF CONSOLIDATING THAT POWER, IT WOULD BE VERY IMPACTFUL. I THINK THAT WE HAVE DONE SOME OF THAT WITHIN HOWEVER LONG IT IS THAT THE COALITION HAS BEEN GOING.'

'THIS CONTEST THAT'S GOING ON WITHIN ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES, WHERE OUTSIDE FORCES ARE TRYING TO PROFITEER FROM THESE SPACES – THEY'RE ACKNOWLEDGED AS BENIGN OR NEUTRAL. IT'S NOT EVEN ACKNOWLEDGED AS A CONTEST. AND I THINK THAT PART OF WHAT THE COALITION DOES, BECAUSE IT BRINGS ALL THE STORIES TOGETHER, IT MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THERE IS THIS CONTEST GOING ON. AND THAT IT'S NOT JUST WITHIN OUR SORT OF EXPERIENCES, IT'S WITHIN THE WHOLE SPACE OF PLANNING ACROSS LONDON AND PROBABLY ACROSS THE WHOLE COUNTRY.'

'I THINK IT'S ABOUT SHARED LIVED EXPERIENCES, SHARING HISTORIES, SHARING WHAT SORTS OF THINGS WORK AND WHAT THINGS DON'T WORK. [SHARING] PRACTICAL METHODOLOGIES, KNOWLEDGE. BUT ALSO GIVING EACH OTHER SOLIDARITY THAT GIVES US ALL STRENGTH AND HELPS US BUILD OUR POWER. IT'S ABOUT GIVING VOICE, BUT WITHIN THE PLANNING SYSTEM, COMMUNITIES DON'T REALLY HAVE A VOICE.'



## BONUS LEARNING (#6): COALITION SPACES NEED FUNDING



## 4. WHAT'S NEXT



'WE HAVE TO KEEP FIGHTING.'



## 5. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

